

MEETING MINUTES

Commonwealth of Virginia Commission to Study Slavery and Subsequent De Jure and De Facto Racial and Economic Discrimination Against African Americans June 23, 2022, 10:00 a.m.

In-Person Meeting

Members present in person: Delegate Delores L. McQuinn; Dr. Jody Lynn Allen

Members present via Zoom: Dr. Andrea Douglas; Dr. Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander; and Dr. Edward Ayers.

Absent: Senator Mamie E. Locke; Dr. John W. Kinney; Mr. Xavier Richardson; Dr. Karen Sherry; and Mr. Daniel P. Watkins.

Call to Order

Committee chair Delores L. McQuinn called the meeting to order at 10:14 am and confirmed that there would not be a quorum.

Introduction of Members and Comments

Delegate McQuinn welcomed Commission members and guests, especially Dr. Sandra Treadway and Dr. Gregg Kimball from the Library of Virginia. Delegate McQuinn asked each Commission member present to introduce themselves. Following this, Delegate McQuinn thanked those in the room for their patience as the Commission staff worked through technical difficulties with AV equipment.

Updates from the Commission Chair

Delegate McQuinn notified the Commissioners that the Commission to Study Slavery had been granted a two-year extension, with financial support, as passed in General Assembly and approved by Governor Youngkin.

Updates from the Project Manager

Delegate McQuinn called for a project update from Dominique Luster. Ms. Luster spoke about the research conducted over the past six months at the Library of Virginia by herself and the outreach and education staff. She reported that this research has predominantly included reading and aggregating digital and print resources found at the State Library. Ms. Luster shared her plans to seek Commissioners' input on resource selection. Ms. Luster will share an expanded two-year project plan with the Commissioners via email and will reach out to Commissioners individually to mine their areas of expertise.

Future Meeting Locations

Delegate McQuinn shared with the Commissioners her interest in holding meetings across the Commonwealth. She expressed her interest in the Commissioners hosting meetings at their affiliated

institutions. She emphasized her interest in focusing on engaging communities across the Commonwealth via social media, radio, public announcements, and through other creative means.

Discussion of Subcommittees

Delegate McQuinn asked Ms. Luster to read the Commission's charging legislation, §§ 2.2-2551 through 2.2-2557 of the Code of Virginia, as a reminder of the purpose of the Commission. Ms. Luster read the abstract provided on the Code of Virginia website. Delegate McQuinn gave the floor to Ms. Luster. Based on the legislation, Ms. Luster suggested five subcommittees: economics, education, healthcare, housing, and voting. Delegate McQuinn explained that the proposed subcommittees would collaborate with the Project Manager on their area of expertise to recommend resources and reach out to other experts. Dr. Newby-Alexander and Dr. Andrea Douglas expressed interest in the subcommittee focused on education. Dr. Allen and Delegate McQuinn expressed interest in the subcommittee focused on voting. Dr. Ayers expressed interest in the subcommittee focused on economics. Ms. Luster will follow up with each Commission member to confirm assignments.

Research update from Project Manager

Ms. Luster gave a brief overview of the research conducted thus far by herself and the Library of Virginia staff. She spoke to an extensive outline of the final report derived directly from legislation utilizing primary and secondary sources. This outline includes citations and primarily uses resources from the Library of Virginia. She then discussed a sample modeling she created on the topic of housing. The modeling detailed a comprehensive listing of State and Federal legislation that impacted housing for African Americans in Virginia.

Discussion on Public Comment

Following this discussion, Delegate McQuinn asked Commissioners for book recommendations for the general public as well as suggestions for keynote speakers. Dr. Allen added interest in the Commission curating a list of recommended documentaries, books, and online exhibitions. Dr. Douglas suggested adding "places of interest" to the list. Suggestions included the Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama, the Whitney Plantation in Wallace, Louisiana, and the Freedom House in Washington, DC.

Next Steps

Delegate McQuinn shared that she and Ms. Luster will have monthly meetings and plan to create a six-month meeting plan.

Comments from Public

There were no comments from the general public. Ms. Luster asked for recommendations on how to engage the public. She mentioned traveling to different locations across the Commonwealth. Following this, Delegate McQuinn invited Dr. Gregg Kimball from the Library of Virginia to discuss the Library's Virginia Untold: African American Narrative Project. Delegate McQuinn asked Dr. Byrd from Virginia Union University Center for African American History and Culture to say a few words. Dr. Byrd welcomed the Commission members and guests to Virginia Union University and shared information about the history of the institution dating back to Lumpkin's Jail.

Closing Remarks

Delegate McQuinn asked the Commissioners to share local or national news related to the Commission's work with the Project Manager. Dr. Newby-Alexander asked a follow-up question regarding the subcommittees. She noted that many African American spaces in Virginia are in danger of being lost or are held in private hands. She expressed concern that none of the proposed subcommittee categories addressed these endangered sites and wondered if this topic could be included. Delegate McQuinn answered yes.

Adjournment

Delegate McQuinn closed the meeting at 11:14am.